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Message Text

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67
ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 DRC-01 AID-20 PC-04 /120 W
---------- 109934
R 202103Z JUN 74
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3395
INFO AMCONSUL CALI
AMCONSUL MEDELLIN

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EO 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT CO
SUBJ: REACTION TO LOPEZ' DEPARTURE MESSAGE

REF: BOGOTA 5346

1. PRESIDENT-ELECT ALFONSO LOPEZ MICHELSEN, IN HIS JUNE 17 MESSAGE TO THE NATION ON THE EVE OF HIS DEPARTURE FOR EUROPE (REFTEL) STATED HIS INTENTION OF NOT INTERVENING IN THE LIBERAL PARTY'S SELECTION OF NEW LEADERSHIP, CAUTIONED HIS FOLLOWERS AGAINST AN "EXCESS OF TRIUMPHANCY" AND CRITICIZED CERTAIN OFFICIALS OF THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION FOR MAKING LONG-TERM COMMITMENTS AND DIPLOMATIC APPOINTMENTS IN THE CLOSING WEEKS OF ITS TERM.

2. PRESIDENT PASTRANA REACTED SHARPLY TO LOPEZ' CRITICISM. HE POINTED OUT THAT HIS MANDATE RAN UNTIL AUGUST 7 AND THAT HE WOULD CONTINUE TO GOVERN UNTIL THAT TIME. AT THE SAME TIME THE SECYGEN OF THE PRESIDENCY ISSUED AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT REBUTTING THE LOPEZ CHARGES. IN THAT STATEMENT, THE PASTRANA ADMIN CLAIMED THAT NO NEW CONTRACTS HAD BEEN ENTERED INTO BY THE GOC AND THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF DIP APPOINTMENTS. THE STATEMENT NOTED
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THAT IN FACT THERE WERE NOW TEN UNFILLED

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AMBASSADORSHIPS RESULTING FROM RESIGNATIONS IN THE LAST FEW
WEEKS.

3. POLIT FIGURES FROM BOTH PARTIES HASTENED TO ENDORSE THE
LOPEZ STATEMENT OR TO EXPRESS SUPPORT FOR THE PASTRANA POINT
OF VIEW. THE POLIT EXCHANGE, WHILE INTENSIVE, WAS BRIEF AND APPEARS
TO HAVE SUBSIDED. THE JUNE 20 LEAD EDITORIAL IN THE INFLUENTIAL
LIBERAL DAILY EL TIEMPO POINTED OUT THAT THE PRES-ELECT HAD,
PROBABLY WITHOUT WISHING TO DO SO,SET OFF SOMETHING OF A BOMB.
THE EDITORIAL WENT ON, HOWEVER TO POINT OUT THAT FRICTION BETWEEN
SUCCEEDING ADMINS WAS INEVITABLE; THAT THE PRESENT INSTANCE REALLY
INVOLVED A NON EXISTENT PROBLEM, CONSISTING OF AN EXCHANGE OF
STATEMENTS OF FLEETING IMPORTANCE.

4. THE FLURRY CAUSED BY LOPEZ' STATEMENT COULD NOT HAVE BEEN ENTIRELY
INADVERTENT. WHILE THE PRES-ELECT'S PURPOSE IN MAKING THE STATEMENT
IS OF COURSE OPEN TO INTERPRETATION, IT CAN PROBABLY BE TAKEN
AT FACE VALUE--A) A DESIRE TO CALM SOME OF THE EAGERNESS OF
HIS FOLLOWERS WHICH COULD LEAD HIM INTO DIFFICULT POLIT RELATIONS,
AS FOR EXAMPLE ACTING PARTY HEAD INDALECIO LIEVANO'S BLAST AT THE
MAYOR OF BOGOTA WHICH PROMPTED RESIGNATION (NOT ACCEPTED)
OF THE MAYOR'S CABINET; B) A DESIRE TO DISASSOCIATE HIMSELF FROM
UP COMING INTERNAL PARTY FIGHTS SUCH AS ELECTION OF THE DESIGNADO
AND PARTY CHIEF AND BY THUS REMAINING ABOVE THE FRAY RETAIN
HIS CLOUT WITH ALL SIDES; AND C) A CONCERN THAT THE PASTRANA
ADMIN MAY IN EFFECT SEEK TO LIMIT HIS FREEDOM OF ACTION BY PRE-
SENTING HIM WITH FAIT ACCOMPLIS. THIS LAST CONCERN IN TURN REFLECTS
LOPEZ' DESIRE TO "HIT THE GROUND RUNNING" WITH HIS OWN PROGRAM
AS UNENCUMBERED AS POSSIBLE BY THE PREVIOUS ADMIN'S COMMITMENTS.

5. THE "NEEDLE" LOPEZ INCLUDED IN HIS MESSAGE REFERRED NOT ONLY
TO DIP APPOINTMENTS BUT ALSO TO "LONG TERM CONTRACTS," WHICH MAY
HAVE BEEN A REFERENCE TO SUCH THINGS AS THE HANNA NICKEL PROJECT
AND THE PEABODY AND BRAZILIAN COAL ARRANGEMENTS WHICH ARE PRESENTLY
IN FINAL STAGES (SEE BOGOTA A-110). IF SO THE PROBABILITY IS NOT THAT

LOPEZ WOULD DISAGREE WITH THE IDEA OF SUCH CONTRACTS PER SE BUT
WITH BEING PRESENTED WITH TERMS HE DID NOT APPROVE OR NEGOTIATE.
IN ANY EVENT THE EFFECT OF HIS STATEMENT AND HIS ABSENCE FROM
COLOMBIA WILL BE TO RETAIN THE IDEPENDENCE OF HIS ADMIN WITH RESPECT
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TO SUCH AGREEMENTS. VAKY

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